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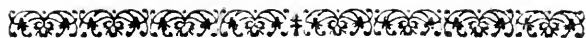


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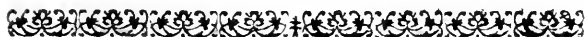


A  
LETTER

Concerning

Repealing

THE  
*TRIENNIAL ACT.*





A

# LETTER

TO A

Friend in *SUFFOLK*,

Occasion'd by a Report of

# Repealing

THE

# *TRIENNIAL ACT.*

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THE SECOND EDITION.

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L O N D O N :

Printed in the Year M D C C X V I .

[Price Four-Pence.]

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A  
LETTER  
Concerning  
REPEALING  
THE  
Triennial Act.

*London, April 9. 1716.*

S I R,



OUR last Letter expresth  
a much greater Concern  
than I have discovered in  
you upon any other Occa-  
sion: You expostulate with  
an unusual Warmth upon  
the Assurances you have given you by ma-  
ny in your Parts, That there is certainly

a Design amongst the Great Men of the *Whig* Party, to get a Law, either to Suspend the Triennial Act for Four Years, or to Repeal it ; and that a new Parliament shall be chosen every Seven Years.

I HOPE, Sir, you will excuse me, if I do not express an equal Concern upon the same Occasion ; and will not doubt but when the Reasons and Arguments there seem to be either for doing the one or the other shall be suggested to you, you will be of Opinion, that taking such a Step is absolutely necessary for the Peace and Quiet of the Kingdom, the Safety and Preservation of His Majesty's Person and Government, and the Religious and Civil Rights of the People.

IT has never been made a Question, and I find it admitted by no less a Man than the Earl of *Oxford* (now Prisoner in the Tower) in his Speech upon a remarkable Occasion some Years ago, That the Legislative in all Nations have a Power lodged in them for the Safety of the whole. Which, Sir, gives me Assurance to say, That this Parliament may, by Act of Parliament, not only be continued for such Time as the Legislative shall think fit, but the Triennial Act it self repeal'd, which

which has not been made much more than  
 Twenty Years, and of which the late  
 Duke of *Leeds* thus expresth himself in  
 his *Letters*: “ I have seen many Abuses  
 “ of the Triennial Act, about which King  
 “ *William* was very much displeas’d with  
 “ me for concurring in it ; and used the  
 “ same Expression which King *Charles* had  
 “ done on another Occasion, *That I should*  
 “ *live to repent it* ; and I am not afraid  
 “ to acknowledge, that I have repented  
 “ it, since I have seen such wrong Uses  
 “ made of it.

As the Legislative Power can make  
 Laws and abolish them, so ’tis Superiour  
 to all Powers whatsoever ; and as the  
 House of Commons are part of the Le-  
 gislative Power, it must be agreed, they  
 have a Power to go upon the Repeal of  
 the Triennial Act, or the suspending of  
 it. But when I say, the Parliament have  
 a Power, and can do a Thing, I would  
 not have it understood, that I think they  
 are Impowered or have Authority to re-  
 peal *Magna Charta*, and all other subse-  
 quent Laws which have been made in fa-  
 vour of Life, Liberty and Property ; and  
 as it is on the present Settlement only  
 these wholly depend, therefore as *Britons*  
 and free Subjects we ought heartily to  
 joyn

joyn in such Measures as shall be most necessary to strengthen and secure the same.

You tell me that Gentlemen say, If they could see any Danger to the Government, or any the least Occasion for it, they would be for suspending or repealing the Triennial Act. But, Sir, were there not Numbers of Gentlemen who reasoned thus, when the Parliament empowered His Majesty to raise such Force as he should think fit, and the *Habeas Corpus* Act was suspended: And if any Government was in Danger, this was, not long ago, and may be again, if all just and necessary Care be not taken, as well as Strength and Power given to it.

FOR let us but consider the many Stories insinuated and so confidently asserted, with what Views can they be, unless to distress or unhinge the Government? And if there be a means of preserving it, and we will not come into it, and the Designs formed against it should take effect, how shall we answer the Misfortunes that must inevitably be brought upon the Kingdom?

I MIGHT suggest to you many Difficulties in forming the necessary Alliances with Foreign Princes and States, from the uncertainty which they may justly apprehend in the Performance or Execution of our Treaties, upon any sudden Change in our Parliament and Councils, the ill Effects of which all our Allies so lately to their Cost experienc'd. But not to enlarge upon this, I shall only observe, that when it is so notorious, what Parties there are for the Pretender, and the ill Humour is still remaining and kept up in the People ; when the Rebellion is not quell'd, and the Expectations of the Disaffected are great from Abroad ; when some Princes of *Europe*, (whose Interests as Friends or Allies more immediately concern us) are at present very much embroil'd ; and others (who have been our natural Enemies) are in Peace, discharging their Debts and enlarging their Commerce, recruiting their Armies, and repairing and rebuilding their Navy Royal : In such a Case it must be thought the truest Wisdom and the best Politicks, to prevent by all just and necessary Measures, the hazard of being brought in a little Time to that Dilemma, of having the preservation of our Constitution depend on a single Point, for want

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of

of a prudent Foresight and timely Provision.

You likewise tell me, That the People's choosing their Representatives in Parliament, as appointed by the Triennial Act, is a Fundamental Part of the Constitution, derived from the ancient Custom of Parliaments being chosen Annually; therefore to repeal this Act would be dangerous to their Liberty. I must own, Sir, as other Laws are, it is part of our Constitution, or rather one of the Laws of the Land, till it be repealed; but it is not, nor can it be called an ancient fundamental Part of our Constitution; for I very well remember who were the Men that laboured it in both Houses of Parliament, and advised King *William* to give the Royal Assent to it: Some in both Houses, I am perswaded, meant no Harm to him or his Government in being Zealous for it; but there were others who were for it, foreseeing that by means of it, they should distress him and his Government, and therein they judged rightly.

As to that ancient Custom from whence you would derive this Law, I believe upon Examination you will find, that Parliaments

liaments were only to be held Annually, but chosen at the pleasure of the Prince. And what confirms me the more herein is, That in the Time of *Henry VII.* when by an Accession of the Lands into the Commons, they became more considerable than ever before, such a Right of Parliaments being chosen Annually was not then, nor has been at any time since, claimed, insisted upon, or practised, tho' the Right of Parliaments sitting Annually, has on several Occasions, and in different Reigns, been always claimed and insisted upon as a Fundamental Part of our Constitution, which was nevertheless violated in the four Reigns before the Revolution, but now intended to be strengthened, not infringed, by the Bill in Question.

BUT, Sir, you object the Consequences of making such a Precedent, as either suspending the Triennial Act for Four Years, or repealing it, and making a Law, that a new Parliament shall be chosen every Seventh Year. To which I Answer, That in Case of a good Parliament, 'tis not to be imagined they will make use of this Precedent but upon as good Grounds as the Parliament shall now, and an ill Parliament will not stick at doing it, were there not any Precedent, nor any Reasons at all for it.

INDEED it should be our Care to avoid the ill Consequence of what we do for the future, but our immediate Care must be the preservation of the present Establishment; and I think, since this Bill is found necessary, if it should Miscarry, a very great Blow is given to the Government, and we shall be a much more divided and unhappy People.

FOR I am perswaded, that 'tis to prevent what must be the Consequence of another Rebellion or a Civil War, and the Pretender's coming again amongst us, as well as secure the present Establishment, and punish the Enemies of it, that this Matter has been proposed and resolved upon; and must be the Reasons, with others suggested, which shall govern Men in approving and coming heartily into it.

I HAVE already taken notice, that the late Duke of *Leeds*, who was a Proposer of this Triennial Act, and a chief Adviser of King *William* to pass it, tells us, That even then he had seen such *wrong Uses* made of it, that he had lived to repent it: And I might not only shew how far short it has been in answering the Ends, (some very



very good Men and Promoters of the Revolution, Enemies to *France* and *Jacobitism*) expected from it ; but how very ruinous it has proved to many Gentlemen of Estates, who have been Candidates, and of what dangerous Consequences to the People in particular, and the Kingdom in general ; how in some Places it has prevented common Justice from being done, and in others been the Cause that Injustice has been openly countenanc'd and avowed ; and how in fine (not to mention that Money has been brought into most Corporations to bribe the Electors, or that they look upon it as a certain Income coming to them every three Years, which slackens that honest Industry whereby they would be better maintained ; and more valuable Members of the Commonwealth, introduces a Corruption of Morals, and encourages an Idleness ready for any Mischief) it has been one great Occasion of irritating Parties more and more one against another, and keeping up Heats and Divisions, Factions and Discontents throughout the Kingdom. But to pass this by :

IF the Triennial Act is of that Benefit to the Subject as is now pretended, I would desire those who show so much  
Zeal

Zeal against suspending or repealing it, to consider, Whether if the Rebellion had happened but just before its Expiration, or at the Time of Election, what then must have been done? Or if there could have been any Freedom of Election, what must have been the Consequence of either? And likewise to consider, what a Condition we had been in, if the Contrivance that was laid had not been timely foreseen and prevented taking Effect? And tho' the Designs of our Enemies may be disappointed for the present, we know not how far off another Attempt may be, nor what they have in Secret, and in Store against us. Which should weigh with us at this Time, and induce us to lay aside remote Fears, and come into Measures for the safety of the Government.

THAT the Government is not so safe as some would have us believe, may be easily perceiv'd, and those who are inquisitive, can't but hear how industrious already the Enemies to the Protestant Succession are, in preparing the People to to make choice of Men to represent them in Parliament, who will be for their purposes, and will, instead of supporting the Government, distress it, and hazard its very Being.

THERE

THERE is not any Thing more common, than to hear the Disaffected about this great Town publickly declaring, they shall carry the next Elections all to nothing against the present Majority ; and no doubt but they have good Reason for what they say, and will not want an Argument, which I fear the poor Electors have not Virtue to withstand ; who, no more than too many rich One's, are sensible of, or consider the Consequences one way or other attending their Country by the Choice their Votes may help to make.

BUT, Sir, if an Election at the Time prescribed by the Triennial Act is not too hazardous for the unsettled State we are in, or would not shew there are too many amongst us Enemies to their Rightful and Lawful King and Native Country, and thereby animate our Domestick Enemies to another Rebellion, and encourage our Foreign One's to give them Assistance, and instead of barely permitting the Pretender to come, openly to send him ; and if no *French Levadore's* or Foreign Money is sent from Abroad, nor *English* Money raised by Papists and Jacobites, to be spent in treating and bribing the Electors of  
Great-

*Great-Britain*, I am fully perswaded from the apparent Tendency of all their Actions for the good of their Country, those Gentlemen who have pursued it, and are denominated *Whigs*, would carry it by a much greater Majority ; but for the Reasons before-mentioned, it may be easily apprehended, the Honesty of their Actions will not be of it self equal to the Artifices, Insinuations, and Corruptions of their Adversaries, and the Stake is too great to be loosely hazarded ; therefore 'tis but common Prudence to defer it till such Time as it may be fully, particularly and generally known, That what was so long ago suggested by the *Whigs* of the *Tory* Scheme, has proved true in every Instance, and not any thing that has been suggested by the *Tories* of the *Whigs*, but has appeared false and groundless ; and that the Stories and Calumnies so industriously spread, were not only to allienate the Affections of the People from His Majesty, but to distract the Minds of Men from seeing or improving the glorious View of Publick Happiness, which God had wonderfully placed before our Eyes, and consequently make way for the Pretender, Popery and Arbitrary Power.

I HOPE, Sir, it is no longer a Dispute in your Parts, That some of the great Officers of this Kingdom, at the Time of the Queen's Death, had formed a Design to bring in the Pretender, and set aside the *Hanover* Succession ; that others are in his Service, who, if they are not privately now, were, till very lately, publicly idoliz'd by the *Tories* ; that Risings were intended in favour of the Pretender in many Parts of this Kingdom, particularly that his Standard was to have been set up at *Oxford* and at *Bath*, in *Staffordshire*, and in the West of *England*, as well as that it actually was in the North of it, and in *Scotland* ; that there was a Battle at *Preston* in *Lancashire*, where Two Thousand Rebels were taken, and another at *Dumblain* in *Scotland*, where the Rebels (tho' Four to One of His Majesty's Forces) were beaten, and obliged to retire back to *Perth* ; that the Rebels are put to Flight, and the Pretender himself, with his General, and some Officers Civil and Military, escaped into *France*.

WE might indeed justly have expected the People would have perceived, that what the Parliament has been doing in supporting His Majesty King GEORGE on  
C the

the Throne, was to secure and preserve the Church of *England*, as well as their Civil Liberties, especially when they have passed a Law for ascertaining the Disposition of Money arising from First-Fruits and Tenths, given by the late Queen, (during a *Whig* Administration, and settled by a *Whig* Parliament) and for Maintenance of Ministers to officiate in the Fifty new Churches shall be built in or about this great City; which with His Majesty's Royal Donative to the University of *Cambridge*, shews a particular regard to the Church, even when the safety and preservation of the State might reasonably be supposed fully to employ them, and that so much endanger'd by Men who pretend to justify themselves from their Love to the Church; all which ought to be an entire Confutation of the many scandalous Insinuations of the Church's Danger from His Majesty's Administration, and the present Parliament.

BUT, Sir, notwithstanding the many Considerations which ought to give the *Whigs* a greater Interest in the Affections of the People than at the last Election; I am for continuing this Parliament for at least Four Years after the Three Years prescribed by the Triennial Act, that they  
may

may have Time sufficient to bring to Justice and Judgment, the Lords already impeached, and all other the Betrayers of their Country, Advisers and Makers of the destructive and pernicious Treaties of Peace and Commerce concluded at *Utrecht* ; to consider the State of the Nation, as well in respect to its Foreign and Domestick Trade, as the great Load of Debt it now labours under or has upon it ; to make Inquisition into the Authors and Fomenters, Promoters and Incouragers of the late unnatural and unprovoked Rebellion, and to enact such Laws, and do such other Things as may fully and effectually settle and secure the Government, and put it out of any Danger either from Domestick or Foreign Enemies.

By the Continuance of this Parliament thus long, we may reasonably hope, that the Labyrinth of Iniquity which has been so long disguised by its perplexed and different Mazes, shall in a Train of Inquiry be laid open, and the pernicious Steps and Consequences of it made so evident, that the People shall wonder how they could be so long bewildered in it ; shall, before the end of such Prolongation, sensibly distinguish the false Colourings that artful

Men have cast on their own and others Actions; abominate and detest those who deceitfully fomented the Prejudices and mistaken Notions of their ignorant Countrymen, to advance themselves by the destruction of the Nation; and espouse them who have by such just and necessary Measures, amidst the greatest Dangers and Difficulties, preserved and secured to the Subject the valuable Blessings of Religion and Liberty, rais'd the Credit and Reputation of the Nation, retrieved our Trade and Commerce, and in every Instance acted for the true Interest of their Country.

I MUST own, Sir, that I do think that we had lately a Parliament it would have been dangerous to have continued, and will say, That Parliament deserves as much to be Infamous to Posterity as any Parliament in the Reign of *Henry VI.* that only passed Laws thro' Rancour and Malice, and not any one good one; but I may confidently affirm, from the great Interest the Gentlemen who compose this, have, in preserving the present Royal Family on the Throne, and the Laws of their Country; that this Parliament will never do any Thing to endanger the Liberties of *Europe*, or the Civil and Religious Rights of their Fellow-Subjects.



I MIGHT enter into the particular Characters of many Gentlemen of the best Sense and greatest Estates of the Kingdom in the present House of Commons, and undoubted Lovers of their Country, and hearty Friends to King GEORGE and his Illustrious Family ; but they are so numerous, my Time will not permit me to do it, or say more of them, than that I am sure they will never enter upon any Designs, nor take any Steps prejudicial to the Interest of their Country, or detrimental to the Privilege of the Subject ; for, believe me, they are *Britons*, and the Supports of true Liberty.

IF we therefore, Sir, consider the insufficiency of those Arguments that are brought against it, and the many Reasons for passing a Bill to suspend or repeal the Triennial Act, both from the necessity of Affairs at Home and Abroad, that it is every way consonant and adapted to the strengthening and securing our present happy Settlement, and the prosperity of the Nation ; that it is as such dreaded and opposed by the Enemies of both ; 'tis hoped no honest well-meaning Men will be led away by any of their plausible or specious Pretences, or be so fond of any particular

ticular Schemes of his own, against those solid Reasons which I believe you will be convinc'd there are for such a Bill, here but in part express'd as they occur'd to my own Thoughts; which tho' forcible enough, I am perswaded, are not so cogent as might, and no doubt will be offered by them who are better acquainted with Publick Affairs, than

S I R, &c.



L O N D O N :

Printed for W. WILKINS, at the *Dolphin* in  
*Little-Britain.* 1716.











